Sparrow Art Supply has a new nest

By VIRGINIA FRAU
Contributing Writer

Sparrow Art Supply held a grand reopening at its new location.

CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Main Street was abuzz with the happy chatter of a crowd of art-lovers on Friday, April 5 at Sparrow Art Supply's Grand Reopening Party. Since the store's opening two years ago, it has occupied a lower-level space at 52 Main Street.

Last week, the business completed their move across the Otter Creek bridge.

Revelers were drawn on April 5 to the store and gallery's new space by the promise of Thistle and Honey-catered baked goods, free wine, a raffle and the new exhibit "Green Gold." The Grand Reopening was, as owner Beth Bluestein predicted, "hopping."

The store soft-opened a week ahead of schedule on March 30 before the official reopening on Friday. This marks just four weeks of transition following the March 2 closure of their old space. The new space benefits from the grand east-facing windows that wall the storefront, bathing the gallery and product displays in natural light. Now on street level, the store is more accessible and visible to prospective customers.

The new gallery exhibit, "Green Gold: A Celebration of New Beginnings," accompanied the store's reopening. Inspired by Robert Frost's poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay," it features seven artists' work in ceramics, mixed media, foraged pigments and more. The artists explored personal life transitions as well as seasonal and celestial shifts.

Bluestein first recognized the scarcity of art supply stores in the area when she moved to Middlebury in late 2020 and opened Sparrow after receiving a business grant from Kick Start Middlebury in 2021. Since the store's original opening in March 2022, it has become an important fixture of the local artistic community, and its prime location in downtown Middlebury has brought in repeat customers from across Addison County.

Bluestein emphasized the importance of fostering community, describing how quickly the business became a site of connection for local artists — hobbyists and professionals alike. "I think art-making can be a really fulfilling part of life, but it also can be really lonely sometimes," she said.

"[Bluestein's] very community-minded," said Kate Gridley, who attended Friday's grand reopening. Gridley is a local painter who holds workshops and classes at Middlebury as a visiting instructor.

Bluestein also described how the store nurtures relationships with college staff. On numerous occasions, Sparrow has collaborated with Middlebury professors to stock relevant materials for upcoming classes.

In a rural college town where art students might otherwise resort to the nearest JOANN's an hour away in Burlington for supplies, Sparrow offers an opportunity to explore new materials and discover other local artists right here in town, Bluestein explained.

"Artists are very tactile people, so they want to see things in person — they want to touch things; they want to be able to ask questions," Bluestein said.

Sparrow's rotating gallery also provides an exciting opportunity for emerging artists, students among them, to exhibit their work. "There's kind of a weird 'Catch-22' in the gallery world... in order to exhibit in a gallery, you had to have exhibited before. It's like you have to have shown experience, but how do you do that unless you're given the chance?" Bluestein added.

Bluestein fondly remembers her time in the store's old space, which she spent forming lasting connections with customers and watching young artists grow. She recalls one first-time exhibitor in particular, a Middlebury professor who had recently delved into watercolor. On the opening night of that exhibition, the professor's family and friends gathered to celebrate her work, and Bluestein got to announce and process the artist's first sale.

Aside from mentioning the possibility of shifting from open-call galleries to more curated shows, Bluestein noted that most aspects of the business will remain unchanged as she makes the transition into the new space. The next time you're feeling the urge to get crafty, stock your supplies from Sparrow's new nest.

A deep dive into "Deeper Well"

By DAISY INNES
Contributing Writer

Kacey Musgraves is embracing simplicity on her new album "Deeper Well."

On her highly anticipated sixth studio album, Kacey Musgraves is celebrating the little things in life. After charming the world with her lovestruck enchantment on "Golden Hour" (2018) and evoking the pain of a seemingly perfect relationship's demise on divorce album "Star-Crossed" (2021), "Deeper Well" feels like the closing of an unintentional trilogy.

Co-written and co-produced by Musgraves along with longtime collaborators Ian Fitchuk and Daniel Tashian, this latest album gives recognition to the life events that inspired her last two albums, whilst moving into a safer, more secure and simpler time. Fueled by pretty guitar-picking and stunning lyricism, the album feels like a period of re-growth, the coming of spring — and after a long winter, there's maybe nothing more healing than that.

You'd be hard-pressed to find someone who didn't fall head-over-heels in love with the 2019 Album of the Year-winning "Golden Hour." The country-pop record infused with some fun electropop elements has easily made its way into my list of all-time favorite albums.

Its follow-up, "Star-Crossed," continued with her classic genre-bending production but leaned slightly more towards a pop-focused sound. A product of her divorce from fellow country singer-songwriter Ruston Kelly, the semi-concept album dipped into the story of Romeo and Juliet and perhaps was missing some of country-Kacey's charm. With "Deeper Well," Musgraves seems to have found the right balance in her sound, lyrics and personal touch.

The album kicks off with one of the record's highlights. In "Cardinal," a beautiful track that could have blossomed out of '70s Laurel Canyon, Musgraves asks for the meaning behind the signs, looking for the answers in the immensity of nature. The question "Cardinal / Are you bringing me a message from the other side?" could sum up the album. If someone told me "Cardinal" was a Fleetwood Mac song lost to time, I would believe them in a heartbeat. The bridge celebrates Musgraves' transcendent vocals with harmonies reminiscent of "California Dreamin" before launching back into its '70s drumbeat.

Followed up by another genius piece of songwriting, the endlessly-pretty title track "Deeper Well" is decorated with guitar picking and pushed forward by a steady gentle drumbeat, whilst Musgraves gracefully expresses her satisfaction with the place in which she finds herself.

This album would comfortably fall into the country-folk category, but there are sonic reminders that it was recorded in New York City. "Giver/Taker" nods to the country-pop production that has often characterized Musgraves' music. As the mildly-mellowed synths kick in after the first verse, and the drums sweep in during the second, "Giver/Taker" is reminiscent of a "Golden Hour" highlight.

COURTESY PHOTO

Kasey Musgrave's new album "Deeper Well" came out on March 15, 2024.

Followed up by the semi-tropical vibes of "Sway," we are given a quick call-back to the diversely-popified sound of "Star-Crossed." The track underscores her gorgeously restrained vocal abilities while the swaying harmonies and alt-pop production send the listener off to the peaceful island about which she sings.

"Dinner With Friends" holds an element of nostalgia, opening with a piano melody and lyrics about being in cities you don't live in, the "intimate convos" that can last all night when you're with "your people." Despite having quite a modern sound, these lyrics are the closest we get to very early country-Kacey days: The line "My home state of Texas / The sky there, the horses and dogs / But none of their laws" exemplifies her unparalleled skill of weaving the mundane with the political, the quiet with the conversation.

Amidst the successes, "Deeper Well" also includes a couple of less memorable tracks. The unusually breathy country-pop "Lonely Millionaire" features a catchy hook about money not buying happiness, but the change in sound feels a little disjointed.

"Heaven Is" is a simple finger-picking-fueled melody that contains moments of classic-country songwriting that wouldn't feel out of place in the days of the mid-twentieth century folk music group the Carter Family: "Nobody knows where we go when we die / Maybe we'll ride white horses in the sky." It's a nice song for the nearly three minutes it plays but not an album highpoint. However, this is still Kacey Musgraves, and even one of her lower-ranked songs stands its ground against other contemporary country releases.

With "Nothing To Be Scared Of," a song that initially might feel a little underwhelming for an album closer, Musgraves leaves us with a reminder to accept what comes our way with open arms; whether it's love or loss, "there is nothing to be scared of." If something is meant to be, it will be, and perhaps the beautifully simple lyric of "if a train is meant for me, it won't leave the station" is the best way to end an album like this one.

A word to sum up this album is "contentment" — Musgraves has moved past the spectacular and all-consuming love of "Golden Hour" and the heartbreak of "Star-Crossed" to a place of quiet reflection, peace and pretty guitar. There are small glimpses of the scars that her life experiences have left her with as she sings about "worrying that I might drive the nail into the coffin" in a new relationship, but these are seamlessly woven into lyrics about the healing powers of nature. I do hope that one day we see Musgraves return to the witty, slick lyricism of her earliest country hits, but for now, we can share in the calmness and tranquility her effortless vocals have brought to "Deeper Well."

As spring slowly makes its appearance, this album is the perfect complement to the blessing of the sun shining through your window in the morning. Paired with her two previous albums, "Deeper Well" closes a trilogy from one of country's most skilled songwriters, capturing a personal journey of love, loss and acceptance made all the more authentic because of its unintended nature.

The Middlebury Campus

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Vandalism at The Knoll prompts investigation, anger

By SUSANNA SCHATZ
Senior News Editor

Unknown perpetrators committed vandalism at The Knoll over the weekend of March 29 and 30, damaging tools, materials and projects. Numerous items were burned in The Knoll's fire pit, and live branches were broken off of nearby cherry and poplar trees. Other items burned included an Adirondack chair, gardening supplies, birch wood and bark.

Middlebury Department of Public Safety is actively investigating the incident and is currently unable to share details on who is responsible, according to an email to The Campus from Demitria Kirby, associate vice president of safety at Middlebury.

Public Safety responded to the vandalism when they were informed about it by Knoll staff on the afternoon of Tuesday, April 2. The team then began their investigation by visiting the scene and taking photos. They have since been in further contact with Knoll staff to learn more details, according to Kirby.

Knoll staff members, including Associate Director of the Knoll Megan Brakeley '06 and a number of student interns, published a blog post describing the damage inflicted on the garden. Brakeley declined The Campus' request for comment on the vandalism, citing conflict transformation and restorative practices for her reasoning against a news story on the topic.

Both the Knoll blog post and Kirby noted that Public Safety will increase monitoring of the Knoll following this incident.

"We lament that the unthinking actions of an ignorant few impel us to employ surveillance of the site, but this cannot continue to happen," the Knoll team wrote.

"[They] burned sheets of birch bark that we harvested with and have been charged with keeping safe for our partners of the School of Abenaki last June for covering the longhouse," the Knoll staff wrote in the blog post. "There was specific signage, in Abenaki and English, instructing people not to disturb the birch bark. These materials are irreplaceable and this is a shame."

Public Safety takes all instances of vandalism on campus seriously, according to Kirby.

She added that Public Safety also collaborates with other departments on campus, if needed, to respond to vandalism. The department works with The Office of Community Standards to properly discipline students who cause damage on campus.

Middlebury has outlined a set of community standards that students are expected to uphold, including respect, responsibility, integrity and more. Students' adherence to these standards is overseen by The Office of Community Standards, which is also responsible for imposing consequences for violations.

"If we are able to identify the responsible parties, we send our report to Community Standards

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TOTAL ECLIPSE:
BASKING IN THE AFTERGLOW

JUNE SU / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Students gathered on Battell Beach to observe the eclipse totality, which occurred for about one minute at 3:27 p.m. in Middlebury.

By ANABELLE LAPP
Contributing Writer

Middlebury was abuzz Monday afternoon with post-eclipse excitement as students, faculty, staff and community members reflected on the much-anticipated solar eclipse. This eclipse marks the first time since 1932 that Middlebury has been in the path of totality of a solar eclipse. The next time Vermont will experience a total solar eclipse will be in 2079, and Middlebury will not be in the path of totality.

The college celebrated this unique event with various eclipse-related events held throughout last week and on Monday and Tuesday of this week. These events included a Solar Eclipse Lecture Series — sponsored by the Mittelman Observatory and the Department of Physics — as well as eclipse-themed bracelet making and cookie decorating.

The culmination of these events was the solar eclipse itself. The college hosted a viewing party on Battell Beach, where they provided students with glasses that ensured safe viewing of the sky. Many students attended the Battell Beach festivities and enjoyed refreshments, music and lawn games.

Amy Carlin, presidential events specialist, has been heavily involved in the coordination of the Battell Beach eclipse event.

"The viewing party at Battell Beach provides an opportunity for our faculty, staff and students to gather as a community for this rare and significant celestial event," Carlin wrote in an email to The Campus last week.

Carlin worked alongside Observatory Specialist Dr. Catherine Miller, the Events Management Team, Dining Services, Communications and Marketing, the Department

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SGA hosts presidential debate in Wilson Café

By COLE CHAUDHARI
News Editor

The Student Government Association (SGA) and The Middlebury Campus hosted the annual presidential debate for the 2024-2025 academic year in Wilson Café on April 9, co-moderated by Campus editors Ryan McElroy '25 and Shane Silverman '24.5. Voting for the election, and for SGA class senators, will open via Presence at noon on April 11 and will close at midnight on April 13.

The two candidates competing for the presidency, Josh Harkins '25 and B Striker '25, debated each other on a Zoom call, which was projected onto the main screen in Wilson in front of an audience of approximately 30 people.

Freddi Mitchell '25, one of Harkins' running mates, also participated in the debate through Zoom. Talia Chang '26, Daniza Tazabekova '26 and Ahmed Awadallah '26 — Striker's two vice presidential candidates and Harkins' other vice presidential candidate, respectively — were in person on the debate stage.

Beginning the debate at 6 p.m., McElroy and Silverman briefly outlined the rules of the debate and Abed Abbas '25, the current SGA president, provided a short opening statement.

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LOCAL

Path of totality draws hundreds of thousands to Vermont

By AGNES WANG
Contributing Writer

Middlebury and large swathes of northern Vermont experienced a total solar eclipse for seconds to minutes on Monday, April 8. To commemorate this once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon, communities and individuals across the state have undertaken extensive preparations for months or longer — Brandon, Vt., for instance, started planning for the eclipse a year ago. Events spanned the entire weekend leading up to eclipse day, aiming to create a memorable experience for locals and visitors.

After Monday's eclipse, Vermont will not see another total solar eclipse for about 300 years. Vermont last experienced a total solar eclipse in 1932.

Amy Tatko, director of communications and public outreach at the Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT), wrote in an email to The Campus that she anticipated an influx of up to 160,000 visitors into Vermont, meaning there would be an additional 60,000 vehicles on the roads. Scott Bourne, superintendent of the town of Middlebury's Parks and Recreation, noted that hotels and Airbnb accommodations in major Vermont towns were fully booked.

To manage traffic and weather conditions, the Agency

JUNE SU / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The town of Middlebury hosted a viewing party with a live DJ and food trucks at the Middlebury Rec Park.

of Transportation focused on effectively utilizing highway message boards. Colleen Wright, assistant to the recreation director for the town of Brandon, said that the town turned off traffic lights and used police officers to direct traffic instead. The city also encouraged locals to remain on side streets, allowing tourists to use the main roads.

The town of Brandon arranged a weekend of festivities to celebrate the occasion. Many of its events centered around the eeriness of the eclipse, including a "Night of the Living Dead" zombie walk at Brandon Town Hall where grade school bands replicated a funeral march through a graveyard set with zombie-like creatures.

Pat Wood, a Brandon Chamber of Commerce board member and Brandon Museum steward, highlighted the town's comprehensive approach to embracing all dimensions of the eclipse.

The town even has a tagline for the weekend: "Come to a small town experience of a big time event," according to Wood.

For example, a local brewery tackled the party aspect of the weekend by concocting an "Eclipse Beer" made from a variety of hops named eclipse.

Five local Brandon churches focused on the spiritual

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Middlebury hosts events during Worldwide Climate and Justice Education Week

By MARS ROMERO
Contributing Writer

Middlebury recently participated in Worldwide Climate and Justice Education Week, a global initiative of hundreds of educational institutions around the world that encouraged conversations about climate change and justice across college campuses.

The initiative at Middlebury included a teach-in during classes, climate-oriented events at the Knoll, a talk on climate anxiety and the Holistic Future Circles series.

During the week of April 1–5, the college asked all faculty to devote at least five minutes of their classroom time to a conversation about climate solutions and justice. At least 60 faculty members participated, according to Associate Professor of Economics Julia Berazneva and Climate Action Program Director Minna Brown, organizers of the initiative.

Middlebury also encouraged students to confirm with faculty that they would participate, and take time in the groups in which they participate to talk about climate justice.

The goal of the teach-in was to get people talking about climate change across disciplines and between students.

"This worldwide effort allows us to participate in something bigger than us, while opening the door to increased and improved course integration and campus-wide engagement. Climate change touches everything," Brown wrote in an email to The Campus.

In addition to efforts in the classroom, the college held climate-oriented events last week such as The Knoll Volunteer hours and the 2024 Scott A. Margolin '99 Lecture in Environmental Affairs.

Tara Federoff, sustainability specialist at Franklin Environmental Center at Hillcrest, organized the Holistic Future Circles event teach-in, as another part of the Worldwide Climate and Justice Education Week.

The goal of Holistic Futures Circles is to explore the concept of holistic sustainability, something that Federoff said is more than just climate justice. Self and community care are two main pillars in a sustainable future and society, ideas that are reiterated in practice both at the Knoll and in the goals of the teach-in.

"The Knoll is an opportunity for students to engage in justice work, moving beyond ideation in the classroom to action in the garden," Andrés Oyaga '23, the climate action coordinator, wrote in an email to The Campus.

With the concept of holistic sustainability in mind, the Knoll has built a relationship with local Abenaki tribes by growing indigenous varieties of corn, beans and squash that may otherwise become obsolete. In 2019, Chief Don Stevens of the Nulhegan Abenaki tribe visited Knoll interns and farmers to share his knowledge on Abenaki agricultural practices and food.

"Bringing in indigenous knowledge and indigenous science into the conversation, empowering people who are experiencing the worst effects of climate change to really take action and giving that power redistribution another look," Federoff said.

Holistic Futures Circles also aims to emphasize the importance indigenous agriculture practices in sustainability and climate justice.

"In the past, especially from a US context, settler colonialism has really created a bad environment for holistic sustainability," Federoff said. "Co-production of knowledge and co-management from the ground up, not just consultation, is really something we can move mountains with."

Brown also discussed inequality as the basis of the work in which the Climate Action Program partakes.

"Our work is rooted in the understanding that climate change is deeply unequal and unjust - the people least responsible are those most at risk. Climate justice is also gender justice, racial justice, disability justice... It is deeply intersectional," Brown wrote.

The week culminated with a lecture titled "No Future for Us? Young People's Climate Anxiety and the Future of Reproduction," by Jade S. Sasser, associate professor in the department of gender and sexuality studies at the University of California, Riverside. Sasser shared research on the emotional and mental health effects of climate change, focusing specifically on the despair and distress young people are feeling about climate change.

Brown described seeing this attitude of despair reflected at Middlebury, and emphasized the importance of making space for these feelings.

"In my role, and through the Teach-In, I so hope that students can see themselves reflected in climate work, feel less alone and isolated, and see how each of their paths can connect to climate action," Brown wrote.

The aim of the Worldwide Justice and Education Week at Middlebury was to educate and inspire, and for the organizers, it did just that.

"We've also had very positive feedback from Middlebury's awesome faculty who have found numerous ways to incorporate climate change into their courses: from learning climate change vocabulary in a foreign language to discussing environmental impacts of computing to mapping temperature data to art for activism," Berazneva wrote.

COURTESY PHOTO/ DAN KANE
Volunteer hours at the Knoll were one part of the Worldwide Climate and Justice Education Week initiatives at Middlebury.

Vandalism at The Knoll prompts investigation, anger

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(for students) who then determines next steps," Kirby wrote.

The Knoll is used and appreciated by students, faculty and community members alike. In the blog post, the Knoll team reminded readers that there are rules regarding how the shared space is to be used. Use of the fire pit and pizza oven require written approval in advance, and alcohol and other substances are prohibited, according to the post.

The Knoll's blog post emphasized the space's role as a site for community gathering.

"There is no fence around the Knoll and we will keep it that way," they wrote. "This is not just another space to party and let destruction take over."

The Knoll was founded by students in 2003 and celebrated its 20th anniversary this past fall with festivities and a new community-sourced book of Knoll memories. In the fall of 2022, Knoll student interns wrote an op-ed for The Campus describing how much the Knoll means to them, outlining why it is an important educational and community gathering space.

Kirby urged students to report any vandalism they observe on campus to Public Safety, even if they do not see the damage actively being done. She also encouraged anyone with information on the vandalism at the Knoll to share what they know with Public Safety.

"This is an unfortunate incident as the Knoll is meant to be a safe space where our community can gather and connect," Kirby wrote. "If anyone has any information about what may have occurred, please call our office."

The blog post describing the vandalism also concluded with a request for everyone to respect the Knoll as a shared space.

"It's our joy and a source of pride to care for this space and the life and connection it stewards. Please let's work together to respect this space and one another," the Knoll team wrote.

TOTAL ECLIPSE: BASKING IN THE AFTERGLOW

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of Physics, Student Activities Organization and MCAB to make the viewing party happen. She expressed appreciation for everyone who helped create both the week of events leading up to the eclipse, and the viewing event itself.

Students were not disappointed.

"The energy on Battell Beach was awesome. It was so wholesome and felt like we were in a 90s movie. There was fun music playing and a lot of Spikeball and footballs/frisbees being thrown around. You could almost feel the happiness in the air with the nice weather," Lucca Franz '26 wrote in a message to The Campus.

On campus, the partial phase of the eclipse began around 2:14 p.m.

"As it became darker, I grew more excited, and everyone around was transfixed on the sky," Hanna Freund '27 wrote.

The eclipse reached totality around 3:27 p.m., lasting for about a minute.

"During the eclipse, there was a moment of awe, and then people began cheering — the shared moment felt like a form of bonding across members of our campus. I am so glad that the school was able to lean into such a beautiful moment and soak it up," Hailey Vandenbosch '24 wrote in a message to The Campus.

In addition to the cheering, Franz described hearing the amazement in the crowd gathered together outside.

"The energy during the total eclipse was pure excitement, and everyone was astonished at how cool it was. There was a lot of cheering, clapping, and 'Woahhhs.' It was very special that our campus got to share such a unique amazing moment together," Franz wrote.

Other students agreed with the power of the group viewing event.

"To put it simply, the eclipse was an awe-inspiring experience," Mary Nagy-Benson '24.5 wrote in a message to The Campus. "For me, not only was the eclipse amazing and like nothing I've even seen before, but to experience it with hundreds of my peers simultaneously felt unifying and connecting."

While many students trekked north on Monday, heading off-campus to experience the eclipse, those gathered around Battell Beach had plenty of company to make totality a defining moment in their four years at Middlebury.

"Being able to take the glasses off and experience darkness in the middle of the day was incredible. Sharing this rare experience with so many friends and classmates made the eclipse even more meaningful," Freund wrote.

JUNE SU/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
The eclipse viewing event on Battell Beach included music, ice cream and a popcorn machine.

Student-run MiddNight Food Truck prepares for launch of late-night food, pop-ups

By OLIVIA MUELLER
News Editor

A student-run late-night food truck serving tostadas, street corn and more is set to open in mid-April.

After working with Dining Services since January to plan and budget for the initiative, the MiddNight Food Truck team hosted its first pop-up on April 6 to give students a taste of the intended menu. The pop-up event in Wilson Café gave dozens of students the chance to sample some of the menu, which consists largely of handheld food representing several Latin American cuisines and New York City favorites.

Stephanie Crocker '24 attended the pop-up and tried the sandwich, tostada and elote.

"I thought they were all delicious," Crocker said. "I was really excited to have some diversity culturally in the offerings, and I'm really looking forward to having this as an option over the weekend."

When the truck ultimately opens following some weather-induced delays, it will be parked near Adirondack Circle and serve food on Friday and Saturday nights from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

The team consists of co-founders Tony Morocho '26 and Eduardo Arias Mendez '26, with Hazel Hendler '27 serving as a board member and supervisor of the truck. Morocho worked as the head chef in a restaurant for four years and Arias Mendez worked as a supervisor at a fast-food restaurant. Both wanted to bring their experience in the food industry to campus.

Morocho and Arias Mendez have prioritized taking input from fellow students into account as they designed and priced the menu.

"We heard that people wanted to eat something that was affordable, different, and authentic," Morocho and Mendez wrote in an email to The Campus.

They tested a variety of dishes, aiming to incorporate food from a variety of backgrounds.

"We kept in mind that it had to be a food truck menu; meaning it has to be quick so people do not have to wait for a long time for their food," the two co-founders wrote.

The team also wanted to make the late-night food affordable. Dining Services helped the students arrange necessities like ordering the ingredients and determining the pricing of the menu.

The current menu plan features tostadas, street corn, a Cuban sandwich and tacos, in addition to several beverage options and desserts. Everything on the menu is priced between $5 and $9.

While the team is always looking for additional staff, the MiddNight food truck has managed to find enough students willing to staff the late-night hours ahead of their opening.

"We were lucky to have found people that supported us, believed in this project, and are passionate about this to have committed to working with us on those late nights," Morocho and Arias Mendez wrote.

Hendler is excited to be cooking on the truck opening night, while also bracing for an initial rush of students flocking to a new late-night option.

"I have a lot of experience in the kitchen, and I know I'm going to love tweaking the recipes and finding the best ways to prep to maximize flavor and efficiency," Hendler wrote iwn an email to The Campus.

Most of Hendler's experience has come in a catering setting, so working on the food truck and cooking to order will be a new opportunity, with some difficulties.

"I'm definitely anticipating some challenges in terms of getting our food to remain of consistent quality," she wrote.

Hendler has faith in herself and the team to navigate the opening and to adapt quickly to the fast-paced environment, but also expects a learning curve as she and other student staff adjust.

"We are not just trying to sell food but also an experience and hope that everyone enjoys it as much as we have enjoyed the process of constructing our little legacy in Middlebury's history," Morocho and Arias Mendez wrote.

Olivia Mueller/ The Middlebury Campus

The food truck team hosted a pop-up event on April 6 in Wilson Café to give students a chance to sample the intended menu items.

SGA hosts presidential debate in Wilson Café

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In his statement, Abbas referred to his year leading the SGA as a "building year," noting that working within the SGA yields a mixture of failures and successes, but is always rewarding.

One question posed to the candidates asked about SGA's partnerships with other groups: "To succeed, the SGA must collaborate with many different partners on campus. Can you describe which groups will be most important for you to work with and how you will work with them?"

Responding first, Harkins emphasized the importance of soliciting information and perspectives from students on-campus, and referenced the Middlebury College Activities Board (MCAB) and club sports organizations as groups with which his administration would work.

Striker's response reiterated the importance of communicating with MCAB and establishing channels of contact with faculty, staff and the administration.

"If we all just work together, it will be easy," Striker said.

Another question referenced data from last year's Zeitgeist 5.0 survey that reported overwhelming student ambivalence and dissatisfaction with the SGA, asking each candidate to relay their experience with SGA and their understandings of how SGA functions, along with how it would operate underneath their new leaderships.

Striker replied that his administration would create a "fun environment," and cited his tenure as an SGA sophomore senator last year as experience working within the SGA that prepared him for his potential role as president.

Cole Chaudhari / The Middlebury Campus

The SGA Presidential candidates and their running mates gathered both in-person and virtually for the debate on Tuesday, April 9.

"I do not have any experience with the SGA," Harkins began his response, adding that he was likely one of the people that reported a dissatisfaction with the SGA in last year's Zeitgeist survey, but was running to rectify that very issue.

Harkins went on to outline his administration's plan to re-invigorate the power of SGA committees and SGA senators and to follow-up with the college administration to ensure SGA projects are not dropped over the course of the year.

Another question asked Harkins and Striker to elaborate on their proposed mental health policies, and to differentiate themselves from their opponent.

This question yielded similar responses from Harkins and from Striker, who deferred to Tazabekova to answer the question. Both candidates called for improved counseling systems and counselors that reflect the diversity of student identity and experience on campus, and not perpetual deflections to telehealth services. Tazabekova mentioned that, if elected, she, Chang and Striker plan to improve classroom accessibility so that student access to learning does not feel impeded.

Additional questions from McElroy and Silverman dealt with being away from campus. Both Striker and Harkins are currently abroad — Striker having been so for the whole academic year, with Harkins abroad since J-Term — and both responded that their current physical distance from the college is not a detriment to their campus literacy.

None of the four vice presidential candidates reported that they will be studying abroad for the 2024-2025 academic year.

The final question asked Harkins and Striker to state why they were better than their opponent.

"I am qualified because I am part of the community. That's the only qualification that matters," Harkins said. Both he and Mitchell emphasized the well-roundedness of their administration's experience with on campus organizations, and the long-lasting relationships they have built with college administrators.

Striker's response highlighted his various small business enterprises on campus, including "4Wheels," a ride-sharing service he operated in 2021 and 2022 and "4Meals," a tool that allows students to find people to sit with while eating in the dining hall. Chang described her experience as co-director of the SGA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee, which she said provided her with the lessons needed to be a successful SGA vice president.

After the main segment of the debate ended, the event opened up to questions from the audience.

Topics of these audience-submitted questions included the use of A.I. within the classroom and as it pertains to the Honor Code, how Harkins' predominantly white administration will incorporate BIPOC voices, methods of bridging the social gap between athletes and non-athletes and the process required to form student clubs.

In their closing statements, both candidates reiterated their administration's main proposed policies and encouraged students to vote in the election.

Striker re-outlined the four policy categories on which his administration is focused — Health, Community, Access and Transparency — and acknowledged the effort and dedication of Chang and Tazabekova.

"It is our future," Striker said. "Vote for the future you want to see."

"My administration is running to solve the community crisis," Harkins said in his closing statement. Like Striker, he commended the work of Mitchell and Awadallah as vice presidential candidates, and reminded students to cast a vote in the SGA election.

"No matter who you vote for, please vote," Harkins said. "The only way that we can make this school better is with more participation and more voting."

LIV, LOVE, LOCAL: SHACKSBURY CIDER

Liv, Love, Local is a column highlighting local businesses of Vermont, especially cafés and restaurants in the Middlebury area. Through interviews with owners, I want to highlight the specific successes and challenges that come along with small business ownership in Vermont, the hard work owners and employees put into these businesses, and how these spots serve as places to build community and connection.

By OLIVIA MUELLER
News Editor

Since David Dolginow '09 and Colin Davis '03 founded Shacksbury Cider in 2013, they have been focused on crafting dry, easy-to-drink ciders that highlight the full, complex flavors of the apples from which they are made.

The pair first met through a mutual friend who was also a cider enthusiast. They were inspired by the robust and complex ciders coming out of Europe as well as unique hard ciders in Vermont. Dolginow cited the wild apple cider made by Michael Lee of Twig Farm in Cornwall, Vt. as well as family-cider made in a ginger-aged barrel by Erlé Labounty in Bristol, Vt. The sale of Woodchuck Cider in Middlebury in 2012 to C&C Group for over $300 million solidified the appeal of cider as an attractive market to enter.

"We were finding these beverages that really inspired us that were really tasty but not readily accessible," Dolginow said. He and Davis were ready to bring a unique, more dry cider to the market.

Dolginow was first exposed to agriculture — apples specifically — while a college student, when he worked at Cornwall, Vt.-based Sunrise Orchards, owned by Middlebury alumnus Barney Hodges '91.

At Shacksbury, Davis and Dolginow found a natural division of labor.

"One thing that really has helped our partnership work well was we have different interests and skill sets, so [Davis] was really interested in the production side and operations, and I was much more interested in the sales side," Dolginow said.

Shacksbury initially began with a focus on European-style ciders sold in glass bottles before transitioning to canned ciders in 2018. Although the cider production process is similar to wine, it largely follows the distribution channels of beer in the U.S. Selling in can and keg formats made it possible for Shacksbury ciders to be distributed more widely.

"Transitioning our entire distribution network from wine to beer was incredibly challenging. And had we not been able to do it, eventually, we wouldn't have survived," Dolginow said.

Since its founding, the team has grown to about 17 employees in their cidery facility in Vergennes, Vt. Dolginow enjoys seeing team members grow and succeed in their roles.

The company moved to a larger space on Meigs Road in Vergennes in early 2020, right before the Covid-19 pandemic. Expanding from a 7,000 square foot to 30,000 square foot facility and bringing production in-house was a challenge especially as the cornerstone of their market, sales at various establishments in New York City, completely shuttered.

As Shacksbury weathered the pandemic, they used the space both for in-house production and for co-packing. Co-packing is a service in which Shacksbury uses its canning line to package and can for other brands, including Chug Water, Savouré soda and other local products.

"We're continuing to expand production capacity, which is great," Dolginow said. He added that Shacksbury recently purchased a new filler and runs a canning line from Colorado-based CODI Manufacturing.

Shacksbury has developed several unique cider flavors in addition to more traditional cider flavors, including yuzu ginger and a rosé cider.

"New products are always fun," Dolginow said.

The team is currently working on its next seasonal release.

"We've concocted a cider — we're just calling it our spritz — which is inspired by aperol spritzes, and it tastes awesome and it looks great," Dolginow said.

Canning the spritz will happen in late April for a seasonal summer cider. "It's very refreshing looking, that beautiful red or orange and ice-cold and crisp, sweet, bittersweet," Dolginow said.

A new product typically takes a year to develop end-to-end. The team previously developed a version of a spritz-inspired cider back in 2017 at the same time as its rosé cider. Because the rosé cider happened to coincide with a broader trend of rosé-inspired drinks exploding in popularity during that time period, Shacksbury decided to delay the spritz as the rosé took off.

Sampling the cider at-home for the first time right before an impending release is one of Dolginow's favorite moments in the process. He appreciates the moment of early appreciation when the first run of the cider has been produced and he can enjoy the experience of sipping on the first 12 oz. can at home just ahead of customer responses.

Dolginow has especially appreciated the opportunity to be an entrepreneur in Vermont.

"As a Middlebury alum from the Midwest, I didn't really ever think about staying in Vermont as a viable path up until like my senior year. But I think for some people, there's some real opportunities here in this state. It can be a wonderful place to live," Dolginow said.

OLIVIA MUELLER/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Co-founders and Middlebury alumni David Dolginow '09 and Colin Davis '03 first founded Shacksbury Cider in 2013.

State's attorney Eva Vekos faces calls to resign under mounting scrutiny

By COLE CHAUDHARI
News Editor

Eva Vekos, the state's attorney for Addison County, faces ongoing criticism and calls to resign from Vermont citizens, including ten of the 11 members of the Vermont legislature who represent Addison County. Vekos was charged with a DUI when she arrived at a crime scene intoxicated in January. The charge led to a suspension of her law license on March 27, according to the Addison Independent.

On April 1, a collective press release was issued from the lawmakers' offices advocating for Vekos' resignation from the state attorney's office.

The press release was signed by all nine state representatives in the county and one state senator, with Sen. Christopher Bray (D) being the one legislative member not signing on, according to the Addison Independent.

Legislators argued that Vekos' conduct — both during and since her Jan. 25 arrest — demonstrated an unfitness for her position and betrayed the interests of Addison County constituents and citizens.

"Her unprofessional behavior at a crime scene and offensive comments about local law enforcement officers have significantly harmed the trust and respect between the residents of Addison County and their State's Attorney. In addition, the Vermont Supreme Court's temporary suspension of State's Attorney Vekos' law license makes it impossible for her to carry out the complete duties of her office, leaving Addison County without a fully functional county prosecutor's office during a time when the criminal justice system in Vermont is already stressed," legislators wrote in the press release.

Prior to their public statement, the Addison Independent published an editorial on March 28, which objected to her continued occupancy of the state attorney's office.

Written by the Addison Independent's editor and publisher Angelo Lynn, the editorial called for members of the Democratic Party in Addison County to advocate for Vekos' resignation, opining that she is no longer the person the party elected into office in November 2022.

"Addison County residents deserve a state's attorney who exercises good judgment on such critical issues that affect our collective safety and sense of justice," Lynn wrote.

The editorial also highlighted Vekos' reduced capacities as state attorney given the interim suspension of her law license, effective March 27. Vekos has been temporarily stripped of her law license by the Vermont Supreme Court.

Since her original charges in January, Vekos has taken a three week medical leave, according to The Addison Independent. The legislators wrote in their press release they had "compassion" for medical issues, but emphasized that her failure to cooperate and unprofessional behavior has still caused significant harm to public trust in government.

Citing her failure to appropriately respond to court inquiry about the effect of a DUI on her ability to practice law, the Vermont Supreme Court ruled that Vekos had not properly responded to a lawful demand for information made to her under Rule 8.1 of the Vermont Judiciary's Vermont Rules of Professional Conduct.

While Vekos' license is currently suspended, it remains to be seen whether she will permanently lose her position as Addison County state's attorney.

"Addison County deserves better. It is incumbent upon State's Attorney Vekos to prioritize the safety of Addison County and the vital functions of the prosecutor's office by resigning immediately," the legislators wrote in their press release.

ADDISON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT REPORT SEES RISE IN BEHAVIORAL ISSUES, SPARKING CONCERN

By BEN WAGNER
Local Editor

The Addison Central School District (ACSD) experienced a number of behavioral incidents within the student population from August 2023 to March 2024, a March 25 report revealed.

The report utilized data collected from teachers inputting reports into Educlimber, a software program the district began using this year. While there is no historical data to which to compare this year's numbers, there is a perception that problematic behaviors have been increasing compared to past years.

The Campus reviewed the report prepared by ACSD Assistant Superintendent and Director of Equity & Student Services Nicole Carter, who declined to speak with The Campus for this story. Tara Affolter, an associate professor of education studies and faculty director of equity, justice and inclusion, spoke with The Campus to contextualize the report in the larger context of K-12 education in Vermont.

"We have great local educators here and people are doing work and this is a trend nationwide that post pandemic we are seeing ... more concentration of what we call 'stuff we don't want to happen,'" Affolter told The Campus.

The ACSD presentation stated: "students who struggle with behaviors in school struggle because they are lacking skills. We help kids by helping them to build skills."

Affolter agreed with the concept of skill-building as a way of helping students succeed, but worried about the implications of the report highlighting specific grades such as first grade as having particularly frequent unacceptable behaviors.

The presentation distinguishes between "minor" and "major" behaviors and breaks down the data by grade, gender and race, as is required by federal regulations.

"I think where we often fall down is that the narrative then becomes, 'This child or this particular group of kids or this graduating class is the problem class,'" Affolter said.

She also noted that narratives can be created about specific kids, which sometimes become self-fulfilling as students seek attention while feeling little incentive to actually improve their behavior.

"I just think it's more complicated than saying that school is a dumpster fire and those poor teachers. We can say both those teachers need more support and that behavior is out of line," Affolter said.

Both the ACSD and Affolter called attention to the huge amount of services that schools are expected to provide, and the ways in which specific behaviors obstruct the provision of those services. Affolter also explained that it makes sense that teachers are feeling increased pressure and the need to call out even more loudly for help, given their already increased burdens.

"If you already are providing or trying to provide the basic needs for so many people in the community and you don't have all the resources you need, and then on top of that you have behaviors that make it very hard for you to teach... it's not surprising that it rose to this level," she said.

Affolter also reflected on the problems with the traditional model of managing children with difficulties by isolating them from the "normal" classroom setting.

There is a temptation to separate classrooms, Affolter explained. "But think about the logic behind that: you put the kids with the most challenging behaviors together in a classroom, they're missing out on socialization. They're missing out on all of these things," she added

The ACSD report both explained the district's goal of keeping students in normal classroom settings as much as possible, yet it noted the success of the Wellness Learning Center, a separate space for students with specific social, emotional and behavioral needs, at Mary Hogan. The center has been successful, and ACSD expressed plans for a similar space at either Mary Hogan or Ripton Elementary School.

Affolter, a former public high school teacher, noted the challenges of actively managing a class and said that ideally another person should be removing dysregulated students so the teacher and other students are not upset.

Ultimately, as the ACSD report and Affloter explained, the issues come down to a lack of resources available to help students and teachers succeed.

Affolter noted that one problem with the report was a negative atmosphere surrounding the statistics, which may lead to a defeatist attitude.

"That's a troubling narrative because that's how we start giving up on our schools and our kids and our teachers," she added.

PATH OF TOTALITY DRAWS THOUSANDS TO VERMONT

Continued from Page 1

aspect by participating in the "Ring in The Eclipse" event, synchronously ringing their bells at 2:14 p.m. to signify the eclipse's commencement. Wood emphasized the historical significance of their coordination, as the last time these bells chimed in unison was at the end of the Civil War. The town also prepared numerous performance events ranging from an "Among The Stars Cabaret" on Saturday to a dance group that broke into a dance of Michael Jackson's Thriller on Sunday.

In Bristol, Vt., the Lawrence Memorial Library hosted "Eclipse Programming" throughout the weekend, allowing community members to pick up glasses and learn about the eclipse. The library's program included an informational exhibit provided by the ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain. On eclipse day, the library hosted a children's eclipse-themed storytime.

Katie Male-Riordan, director of the Lawrence Memorial Library, emphasized the importance of including an event geared specifically towards children.

"This is such a neat opportunity to kind of help the kids understand this sort of once-in-a-lifetime experience that's coming their way," Male-Riordan said. "It's such a great entry point for talking about science-based learning, providing literature and other materials to kids to help them wrap their heads around something really neat that's happening in their area."

The town of Middlebury hosted a viewing party with a live DJ and food trucks at the Middlebury Recreation Park called "The Great Middlebury Solar Eclipse Celebration." With the Addison Central School District and Mary Hogan Elementary School canceling classes, Bourne and the rest of Middlebury Parks and Recreation looked forward to the commitment of Middlebury's community in assisting with crowd management. Many locals worked to ensure a safe and secure environment for everyone attending including those at the Ilsley Public Library, which closed for the day so their staff could provide support.

"I know full well 100% that on the day, people will just say, 'Tell me what to do. I'll help you in any way that I can. Just tell me what to do,'" Bourne said.

In Monkton, Vt., Cindy Belanger, Marilyn Cargill, Jessica Demeritt and Teri Fitz-Gerald organized the "Solar Eclipse Party in Monkton" after Cargill noticed that the front lawn of Monkton's Town Hall was a prime westward-facing location to view the eclipse. Sponsored by the town and the Monkton Friends Methodist Church, the event featured food trucks, trivia games, a singalong, sun salutation, and arts and crafts.

A highlight was the creation of a time capsule filled with photos and mementos from the day, to be opened at Vermont's next total solar eclipse in hundreds of years. Cargill and Fitz-Gerald also spotlighted a special feature of Monkton's celebrations: One local artist redesigned the town flag of the sun rising over the Monkton fields and lake to now depict a solar eclipse rising over the same scene. Fitz-Gerald and Cargill emphasized that they felt touched as they imagined the lasting impact of their party on future generations.

"We're going to have babies who are in the arms of parents in the selfie booth, who are going to send those pictures to put in the time capsule. And that baby could be the grandmother that looks at that, and that's pretty cool to me when I think about that no one will see that picture until potentially that child as an elderly person sees it. That just gives me goosebumps," Cargill added.

In some cities of Vermont, totality only lasted around one minute, but McKinley Brumback, associate professor of Physics at the college, described that as making it all the more special.

"We as human beings spend most of our life avoiding looking at the sun because we are not designed to do so," Brumback said. "It's like taking something that we see every day and take for granted, and we get to see it in a completely different way."

When the solar eclipse passed over the U.S. in 2017, Observatory Specialist Dr. Catherine Miller was not in the path of totality. She recalled being mesmerized by the moving crescent eclipse shadows, and became determined to witness the next total solar eclipse that passed over the country.

"I started looking at eclipse maps for the future because when I realized I wasn't going to be able to get to totality in 2017. I was like, 'Okay, what's my next chance?'" Miller said.

Many, like Miller, were determined not to miss Monday's solar eclipse. This week, numerous cities in Vermont lay in the path of totality, attracting many New Englanders from outside the narrow band where the full eclipse occurred.

A total solar eclipse occurs only in rare instances when the moon appears to pass in front of the sun, completely blocking the face of the sun from the earth, according to Brumback.

"This is just actually a really beautiful coincidence. There's no physical reason why this is the case, but the sun and the moon appear the same size in the sky. And if this was not true, if the moon was smaller, or if the sun was bigger, then we would not see total solar eclipses," Brumback explained.

Brumback described her 2017 total eclipse experience as awe-inspiring and surreal.

"To have the air around you grow cold, the sky grow dark, to have the sun disappear from the sky — if you didn't know what was happening, it would feel like a very terrible omen because it feels ominous and spooky," she said.

Owen Kelliher '27.5, a Monkton native, expressed his excitement at experiencing this historic event in his home state surrounded by friends. Reflecting on Vermont not usually being the center of attention, Kelliher hoped that the visitors whom Vermont communities have gone to great lengths to welcome realize how unique the small state is.

"Anything that people can agree on is something that we can bond over. Especially today when so many people have such just kind of conflicting views with each other. It's nice to have something that brings people together," Kelliher said.

QUEER & TRANS STUDENT WELLNESS DAY
Date: Saturday, April 13th
Time: 9:30 am - 6:00 pm
Location: Prism Center
Meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinnner
Facilitator: Adam-Jon Aparicio, Visiting Mental Health Counselor
What will happen!?
• Group activities exploring wellness as a queer and/or trans person
• Free giveaways (Owala water bottles, face/eye masks, journals, plants, fidgets and more)
• Free Massages
• Therapy Dog Visit
• Forest & Nature Therapy Guided Walks
• All meals catered by Crooked Ladle
Register via QR code:
Brought to you by:
The Center for Health & Wellness and The Prism Center

Josh Harkins '25 for SGA President

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

We are excited to endorse Josh Harkins '25 for Student Government Association (SGA) president for the 2024-25 academic year. Harkins, who plans to appoint Freddi Mitchell '25 and Ahmed Awadallah '26 as vice presidents, has clear and pragmatic goals for his term as SGA president.

This week, the Editorial Board met over Zoom with the two SGA presidential candidates and their respective teams: Harkins and his vice presidential appointees and B Striker '25 and his vice presidential appointees, Talia Chang '26 and Daniza Tazabekova '26.

"I like to talk, and I like to complain a lot," Harkins told The Campus as his reason for running. And his talking convinced us.

Harkins centered his campaign around what he described as the lack of community at Middlebury. He outlined three main areas to strengthen the community – advocacy, academics and transparency. Having worked for the Student Activities Office (SAO) and observed the extensive club bureaucracy, Harkins aims to reduce its unnecessary bureaucracy. Harkins and his running mates aim to improve mental health resources for BIPOC students, hold meetings with faculty to better understand their role in student mental health and organize class year dinners. They would like to see the college better integrated with the town of Middlebury, which might involve establishing an annual day of service by students for town residents.

Harkins and his running mates are involved in a diverse set of extracurricular activities that prepare them well to govern the student body effectively. Harkins is treasurer for the Otter Nonsense Improv Group and the quad ball team, a member of Reslife and a former crossword writer for The Campus, in addition to his work as a coordinator with the SAO.

The two opposing candidates outlined similar overarching goals for their terms as president. Harkins and his running mates, however, provided a greater degree of specificity and more concrete plans for achieving these goals.

Mental health is a central part of both candidates' pitches, but we saw more realistic thinking by Harkins in creating tangible change on campus. He acknowledged that hiring more BIPOC mental health counselors is a long-term goal, but he will do what he can to advance that ongoing project by working with the Center for Health and Wellness as well as the administration.

While Striker mentioned aiming to achieve a 100% voter turnout rate for SGA elections — a lofty goal, considering SGA elections got an unusually high 44% turnout last year — we did not hear such unattainable goal-setting from Harkins. Instead, we were impressed by Harkins' ability to articulate actionable plans for achieving his visions.

One notable feature of Striker's policy platform was a whole-hearted embrace of A.I., which he said was inspired, in part, during his time studying in Monterey, Calif. We are skeptical of his unquestioning acceptance of A.I. given the pending Honor Code review next year, especially given his lack of specific details upon further questioning by the Board. This warm welcome to the emerging technology and the quality of his responses made us question what role generative A.I. may have played in his campaign.

Striker's founding of the 4Wheels and 4Meals organizations, two programs that aim to provide transportation and company over meals for students, speaks to his entrepreneurship and compassion, but we appreciated Harkins' and his running mates' experience in collaborative student organizations — a skill we believe is critical for the SGA president.

One issue among both candidates is the lack of SGA experience. What does it say about our student body that the only two candidates who qualified to run are so inexperienced? Additionally, the gender dynamic is hard to ignore here: Why are more experienced women relegated to second-tier candidacies, while male candidates receive the spotlight?

After speaking with both tickets, we noted both Harkins and Striker's vice presidential candidates who attended our meeting had intense passion paired with time on SGA — things that both of the presidential candidates are missing. The four vice presidents frequently gave detailed policy answers to our questions and will arguably be the biggest assets to each presidential candidate if elected.

This felt especially noteworthy for Striker's campaign: His vice presidents were spotted at Battell Beach during the eclipse, shaking hands, schmoozing voters and working hard for every vote. Striker often deferred to his vice presidents, most notably on a question about mental health — arguably the most important topic for students right now — during our meeting and the debate.

COURTESY PHOTO / JOSH HARKINS

"I like to talk, and I like to complain a lot."

Overall, Harkins' detailed policies, strong extracurricular experiences and clear goals lend itself to the role he is seeking. We hope you will be similarly impressed and vote for him as our next SGA president.

Harkins' and his running mates' experience in collaborative student organizations — a skill we believe is critical for the SGA president.

One issue among both candidates is the lack of SGA experience. What does it say about our student body that the only two candidates who qualified to run are so inexperienced? Additionally, the gender dynamic is hard to ignore here: Why are more experienced women relegated to second-tier candidacies, while male candidates receive the spotlight?

After speaking with both tickets, we noted both Harkins and Striker's vice presidential candidates who attended our meeting had intense passion paired with time on SGA — things that both of the presidential candidates are sorely missing. The four vice presidents frequently gave detailed policy answers to our questions and will arguably be the biggest assets to each presidential candidate if elected.

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Overall, Harkins' detailed policies, strong extracurricular experiences and clear goals lend itself to the role he is seeking. We hope you will be similarly impressed and vote for him as our next SGA president.

GRADE INFLATION: IS IT REALLY SO BAD?

Op-Ed

***Cheryl Liu** is a member of the class of 2024.*

Grade inflation is a contentious issue on campus, as seen from the news article released on Feb. 22 titled "Average GPA rose to 3.65 last spring, prompting concern over sustained grade inflation" and The Campus' editorial that week: "Inflated grades, deflated egos: tackling Middlebury's problematic grading culture." Both articles have sparked debate on grade inflation's implications for student evaluation and educational integrity. I hope to shed light on an alternative perspective by proposing that accepting the holistic and growth-oriented educational model that Middlebury, and a liberal arts education, have cultivated is overwhelmingly positive for the student body.

Grade inflation is justified, and the benefits that it brings about override the potential harms at which people gesture. I believe we need a cultural shift in how we define and measure educational success at Middlebury. By embracing a holistic approach that values diverse academic achievements and prioritizes growth, we can mitigate the pressures associated with grade inflation. Such a shift would not only address concerns about grade inflation but also better prepare students for the complexities of the real world. In the workforce, the significance of grades are rendered practically obsolete. For instance, when recruiters look at resumes of potential candidates, educational status and GPA take up merely a sliver of the page. When one gets a call back for interviews, oftentimes they care little about the classes that you've taken or the grades that you got. Rather, they want to hear about who you are as a person. To gauge how well you'll work in a team, how well you take feedback. Lessening the significance of grades would motivate students to cultivate themselves into becoming more well-rounded individuals outside of class.

One argument often brought up in critique of grade inflation is that one may question the merit of grades within an institution that has rampant grade inflation. Does an "A" signify excellent work, or is it merely a reflection of a professor's leniency? In response, I argue that it is important to acknowledge the trust and faith that we, the Middlebury community, place in our educators' judgment. I have faith that professors would not arbitrarily award grades without having first considered the quality of work submitted. While there may be rare instances of professors grading with undue generosity, these should not diminish the credibility of the grading system. Instead, they invite us to consider the broader objectives of education.

The conversation surrounding grade inflation opens a door to reevaluating our approach to education. My decision to attend Middlebury was influenced by a desire to escape the rigid, standardized testing culture that characterized my high school years. The diverse teaching and grading methodologies I've encountered here have overwhelmingly enriched my learning experience. In my view, the perceived "inconsistencies" in our grading policies are a valuable aspect of a liberal arts education. This system offers students the opportunity to experiment with different approaches to learning and assessment. It encourages them to adapt to various professors' grading styles and standards, which underscores the importance of adaptability. Such a skill is invaluable, as it resonates well beyond the confines of undergraduate education, preparing us for our post-graduate futures. Instead of narrowly focusing on "tangible ways to improve our school's culture around grading," as quoted from The Campus' grade inflation editorial, we should embrace innovative teaching and learning strategies that emphasize effort and personal development over traditional grades. For instance, many professors have deviated away from tests and quizzes opting for essays, projects, and presentation-based assessments which tap into the development of soft skills ubiquitous to the modern workforce. Such a paradigm shift would encourage a more engaging and meaningful educational journey, emphasizing intellectual growth rather than a mere accumulation of high grades.

SKILES ROBERTS-SALVADOR

Given the prevailing circumstances and the intensely competitive environment that characterized many of our high school experiences, particularly during senior year, it is reasonable to find a greater rate of grade inflation at Middlebury when compared to other undergraduate institutions nationwide. The same trend has been observed at places like Yale University, where 79% of grades given in 2020-21 were in the A range, and Harvard University, where in 2023 it was found that 80% of their student body held a 3.8 GPA. This expectation stems from the fact that our student body is selected from an elite group academically, having collected leadership positions like trophies while maintaining high averages with AP and IB courses. It should not be surprising that students here consistently exhibit a strong work ethic and want high grades as a reward. It is for what we have been conditioned to strive.

Perhaps more broadly, this debate on grade inflation at Middlebury has prompted me to reflect on the deeper purpose of education. As a philosophy major, I've grappled with the challenge of having to come up with original thoughts as I was taught in an educational institution that expected me to be able to regurgitate information well. As a result, I became good at it. Really good. The value of a liberal arts education comes from the willingness to establish a system that moves away from a competitive, grades-driven atmosphere towards a model that celebrates creativity and critical thinking.

GOING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM TO NEW ORLEANS

Op-Ed

__Zoe Wang__ is a member of the class of 2025.

Ah, spring break—a cherished time for us Midd students to escape the routine and unwind. Little did I anticipate that my decision to participate in a InterVarsity Christian Fellowship service trip to New Orleans would expose me to profound human tragedy and adversity. Yet amidst these challenges, I witnessed the remarkable resilience of the human spirit.

On the first day of work, our van stopped where the road was blocked off due to construction, and we hopped out of the car. On the front porch of a yellow house was a man with a big smile waving at our group. We spent our week painting and working on the flooring of James' house in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, which was hit by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Before arriving in New Orleans on the spring break service trip, one question loomed in my mind: If Hurricane Katrina happened so long ago and people have been working to rebuild for the past 19 years, how is recovery still ongoing? After the first couple of days, it became clear how historical, ecological and racial factors contributed to the overarching situation of the neighborhoods impacted by the hurricane. The road to recovery has been long and slow, but through hard work and perseverance, New Orleans is being restored. The value of serving others teaches so much; we learn through experience and listening to other people's stories, something we cannot get from being inside a classroom.

InterVarsity partnered with the nonprofit Lowernine.org, which gathers volunteers to help with rebuilding houses and distributing donated food around the Lower Ninth Ward. This neighborhood is located next to the New Orleans Canal, which connects the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain. Skilled, retired workers dedicate their time to teaching and empowering volunteers to work on houses impacted by the hurricane that broke the levee along the Industrial Canal and devastated this neighborhood, populated almost entirely by African Americans with over half living below the mean income in the area. With a lack of government support, the Lower Ninth Ward has had a long rebuilding journey compared to more affluent neighborhoods in New Orleans, but through the hard work of volunteers, houses have been on their way to restoration.

The yellow one-story house we helped to reconstruct had steps leading up to a nice porch swing. Inside lay a homey living room with a hallway extending back to a room with blue walls. The house used to be two stories, but the hurricane flooded and destroyed the top floor. Our group stepped into the dusty room with unfinished work and half empty paint buckets. The bathroom was a splotchy cream color fading to yellow, with outlets out of their sockets and dusty floors waiting for new flooring. Over the course of a week, we painted the bathroom, closet and laundry room white, and installed flooring in the bedroom and closet. This process required us to each learn how to use the power saw and drills to cut the pieces of wooden flooring to make pieces that fit the room. Learning how to use power tools like these for building was a more special skill to have compared to the mundane, everyday typing of a student.

Each day everyone at James' house brought bagged lunch sandwiches out to the front porch and discussed our thoughts on the trip so far. On the second day, we took an almost three hour lunch break. Despite having just one day of volunteering together at that point, we shared stories of hurt that led to new direction in life, asked questions about dealing with hardships and expressed stories as personal as overcoming suicidal thoughts.

Our mixed group included students from many different colleges who grew up in California, Boston and all the way to Mongolia. Nonetheless, we all ended up in New Orleans and found a place of connection as we worked alongside each other to bring brightly painted walls and smooth flooring to James' house. By leaving everything that weighed us down during the semester and seeing people for who they are, the fact that we just met the day before became insignificant. We were all present in the moment intently listening to what people were willing to share and wanting to support one another. With the slower pace of physical work in a city far away from and far different than Middlebury, I learned a lot from everyone's individual story of how they worked through hardships that I would not have heard about on campus.

While our conversation ended with teary-eyed hugs, our lunch break continued as we went to get snow cones. We chatted lively in pairs during a 10-minute walk to Burnell's Lower Ninth Ward Market. Shortly after arriving, owner Burnell Cotlon himself came out and started to give us a tour around his store. He spoke quickly and passionately, telling us to try new things. "Don't be afraid," he said, "Find out your reason." Cotlon poured his life savings into rebuilding the building, which was demolished by the hurricane. His eagerness was demonstrated through each story he told us.

COURTESY PHOTO / ZOE WANG

Over half of the population of the Lower Ninth Ward is below the average mean income in the area.

"You only live once — that's not true. You only die once. You live everyday," he said enthusiastically. Cotlon invested his efforts in learning how to do the electrical wiring and lay down concrete in the kitchen area himself to save money. Although he made mistakes, he learned so much through the process and then over time, the store became a place for people to not only buy groceries and food, but also a place in the neighborhood. Some do laundry there, and children without Wi-Fi at home do their homework at the store. By paying attention to the needs of his community and applying himself to fulfill those needs, his store has flourished.

Through volunteering, I got a taste of a New Orleans neighborhood that cultivated a valuable learning environment, learned from people from all over the world and volunteered alongside others to contribute to the recovery of the Lower Ninth Ward community. The volunteer work we did provided opportunities for us to learn about neglected populations that aren't mentioned in the classroom, hear stories that might not be a newsworthy spotlight and connect with students who I would otherwise never meet.

Restoration doesn't just happen. It's an investment of time and care that leads to bringing a community together to recover and move forward. Classrooms talk about stories of overcoming adversity after all the work is done, but what if the time we live through now is part of that overcoming? What if we could also be empowered to take part in the restoration of communities that need it? What if instead of talking about problems in society, we stepped into spaces where people experience them? We could understand how to serve others around us and learn from new environments so that people in our communities are seen, known and cared for.

JUSTICE FOR GOVERNOR MEAD

Op-Ed

__John M. Lord Jr.__ is a member of the class of 1967.

As reported earlier this year in The Campus, the lawsuit contesting the removal of the Mead name from our chapel has now moved to the discovery phase, during which each party must provide to the other whatever evidence and testimony it has and intends to present in a trial. Given Middlebury College's professed commitment to open dialogue, it is ironic that a legal proceeding is needed to bring full disclosure to the process that led to removing the Mead name.

The chapel is arguably the most iconic building on campus, and one would think that a proposal to change its name would have been a subject of wide-ranging debate in the public square including among students and alumni. Regrettably, that was not the case. The process was conducted behind closed doors.

What little we know about the process is outlined in a September 27, 2021 "Message to the Middlebury Community" from President Laurie Patton and then-Board Chair George Lee, which states only that a "working group" was commissioned to examine Mead's role in promoting eugenics in Vermont. Was anyone on the working group asked to defend the long-deceased governor? The memo further states only that the Prudential Committee, a subset of the Board of Trustees, approved the working group's verdict. That was not a fair trial, and there was no transparency. It should not have been that way.

Eugenics is now a discredited theory, but in Mead's time it was considered a progressive way to address public concerns about the mentally ill. The science of that time posited that mental illness was transmitted through "the mechanism of inheritance," and the thinking was that sterilization would prevent mental illness from being passed onto future generations. Eugenics theories were widely accepted, and eugenics was once a required course of study at Middlebury College. With academic, scientific and public support for the practice, Governor Mead, himself a medical doctor, saw eugenics as a way to prevent and alleviate suffering. He also supported creation of hospitals for the mentally ill, not as punishment, but to promote humane treatment. Although the enlightened thinking of that time has not been borne out, our society is still grappling with the best way to help the mentally ill.

CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Mead's name was removed from the chapel in September 2021.

As for Mead himself, he was a Civil War veteran on the Union side, a Middlebury College graduate and later Middlebury Trustee and benefactor. He was a medical doctor, state legislator and philanthropist; in short, he was an honorable, civic minded man. In his farewell address as Vermont Governor, Mead spoke in support of eugenics. That his alma mater, Middlebury College, had taught eugenics for 50 years must have confirmed to him its scientific legitimacy.

The legislation that led to sterilizations in Vermont was enacted in 1931, 11 years after Mead's death. He had nothing to do with it, yet based on his one speech, the working group branded him an instigator and recommended to Patton that the Mead name be removed from our chapel; she in turn proposed that to the Prudential Committee, and they went along with it.

The reputation of a generous, upstanding man has been unjustly besmirched. The Mead name has been banished from our campus following a closed-door process from which the "Middlebury community" was excluded and in which Mead was afforded no defender. Now the issue has devolved into a legal case that is headed to court with attendant unfavorable publicity for our college. But it need not end this way. With humility and forgiveness, wrongs can be righted. Patton and the Board should revisit their decision, apologize for their mistake and restore the Mead name to our chapel.

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THE PRISM CENTER FOR QUEER AND TRANS LIFE OPENS ITS DOORS

By NATHAN BERNAZZANI
Contributing Writer

Proctor Dining Hall has a new neighbor. On April 6, a vibrant and enthusiastic crowd of people swarmed the common room of the college's newest space on campus: The Prism Center for Queer and Trans Life. Located in the Farrell House at 24 Hillcrest Road, the building was packed from wall to wall with students, faculty, and town residents and task force members who played a major part in the building's development and construction. Attendees were eager to celebrate the center's official integration into the Middlebury community.

The afternoon began with socializing, food, and arts and crafts. Attendees were encouraged to decorate banners to adorn the interior of the Prism Center alongside other student-contributed artwork, murals and painted quotes.

Once the initial clamor of arrivals began to settle down, Prism Center Director Janae Due stepped up to the mic to give the crowd an official welcome. Due's speech delivered a powerful message to the audience about how meaningful the establishment of a space like the Prism Center on campus is for LGBTQIA+ students, queer BIPOC students and the college community as a whole, particularly in light of recent anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation and antagonism across the United States.

"While I hope the Prism Center brings insurmountable joy, I hope the center can also be a place of solace, to hold grief and engage in community for healing, justice and transformation," Due said.

Due also praised the efforts of the Student Government Association (SGA) and President Laurie Patton in helping to bring the idea of the Prism Center to fruition.

The SGA raised the idea back in 2019 of creating a space on campus exclusively dedicated to supporting LGBTQIA+ students. In response, Patton assembled a task force of campus partners who recommended the college establish the Prism Center.

Despite plans for the creation of the center beginning in 2019, the Covid-19 pandemic delayed the physical construction process until the summer of 2023.

Patton spoke at the opening event about the long journey to the opening of the Center, stating that the establishment of a space like the Prism Center is "a day that is so long overdue."

Though the Prism Center is still in its infancy, the response from students has already been one of resounding support and enthusiasm for the events and activities already held by the Center prior to its official opening day.

CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The new Prism center is located in the Farrell House at 24 Hillcrest Road.

"Queer and trans students, and all students, deserve to have a space to be," Due told the attendees of the event. "To be themselves, to figure out who they are, to question, to challenge and be challenged [and] to explore the world, politics, identity, and ideas safely with people that care about them, their success, their hopes and dreams and their lives. I hope the Prism Center is that space for them."

In addition to being a community space, the Center serves as a place where queer and trans students can find physical resources such as Narcan kits, external and internal condoms, dental dams, hygiene products and TransTape. The Center is also working to develop numerous initiatives, including a permanent gender-affirming closet, after-hours access, drop-in counseling hours and more identity-specific affinity spaces for the near future.

As the Prism Center expands, so will its array of events and resources for students. The space is currently open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, during which time anyone can stop by to watch TV, make themselves a meal in the kitchen or just chat with folks in the Center.

Throwing Shade

Egan Turner

ACROSS
1 Body involved in 22-Across
5 Color to wear for best effect during 22-Across
10 Garfield and Tom, for example
14 Mystical glow
15 Make amends
16 Macau's continent
17 Formal address for Woodrow
20 Class of 2024 members, for short
21 UT capital
22 With 25-Across, Monday's event
25 See 22-Across
29 Honolulu's island
30 Maryland seafood delicacy
31 ___Clean: stain remover
32 44-Across opposite
33 State
34 Two Brothers, for example
35 Worcester winter hrs.
36 ___-cone
37 Sherlock creator, initially
38 "So true!", to a texter
39 ___ up: greets a bro
41 Pinocchio feature
42 Montreal water
44 32-Across opposite
45 Only part of 62-Across visible during 22-Across
48 America's largest city that experienced 22-Across
51 ___-Wan Kenobi
52 Ocean Spray morsel
56 "The Name of the Rose" author Umberto
57 Common Vermont noise
58 Style of many Middlebury classes
59 ___-mo
60 Bigga___
61 Absconded
62 Body involved in 22-Across

DOWN
1 Cartography creation
2 My, pluralized
3 Valuable rock
4 Bahamas capital
5 Actor Josh's relatives
6 1-Down abbr.
7 Good stretch?
8 Sinus specialist, for short
9 CNN or MSNBC program
10 Dense in atomic number 20
11 Burro (the Spanish translation, not the Italian)
12 43-Down, in 23-Down
13 Francisco, Diego, and Antonio's need
18 Offline, online
19 "How about that!"
22 "Alas!"
23 Southern Mexico state
24 Ice hockey game conclusion
25 Greek god
26 Without intense emotion
27 Sleazy souls
28 Milne's 11-Down
30 Browns or Guardians, on scoreboards
40 ___ Paulo, Brazil
41 0
43 Male relative
44 Decreased, as 1-Across
45 Toothed tool
46 Orchestra instrument
47 Greek god
48 Urgent
49 Rights org.
50 Not far from now
53 NCAA conf. controversially admitting west coast schools
54 "Give ___ go!"
55 "How you doing?"

WOMEN'S TENNIS HOLDS 4–0 STREAK IN NESCAC

By ELIZABETH LAWRENCE
Contributing Writer

Despite last week's snowfall, the 2024 spring athletic season is in full swing, and the Middlebury women's tennis team is here to prove it. The Panthers are acing the competition, currently holding a 4–0 record and #2 standing within the NESCAC.

The team most recently defeated Connecticut College, crushing the Camels with an impressive 9-0 victory, marking its second straight NESCAC victory. Last month, the Panthers brought home three wins after facing Tufts University, Bates College and Williams College. While they defeated Tufts and Bates with ease — boasting scores of 7–2 and 9–0, respectively — their 5–4 win against Williams was no small feat. Taka Bertrand, the team's head coach, credited the victory to a strong collective effort across both singles and doubles competition.

"It was a cumulative effort because doubles was tight across the two matches, and then we split the singles. So, it could have gone either way, but I thought the team held strong," Bertrand said. "It was nice because I didn't know where the points were going to come from, and that's a great feeling."

While the team has certainly dominated fellow New England competitors, their success reaches beyond the east coast. Over spring break, the Panthers traveled to California and competed in five matches within seven days, securing wins against California Lutheran University (8–1) and California Institute of Technology (7–2). Their matches against Emory University (3–6), Pomona-Pitzer Colleges (3–6) and Claremont-Mudd-Scripps Colleges (1–8), although losses, provided the team with key insights that have helped shape the rest of their season.

"I think the spring break trip really helped us — we had five really tough matches out in California, and it showed us what we needed to work on," Bertrand reflected. "I've been really pleased with how the team has been training since coming back."

The team's hard work has paid off, leading them to more victories and giving them a boost of confidence. Amy Delman '24, one of the team's captains, reflected on the group's increased momentum and believes that this drive will lead the Panthers to their first-ever conference title.

"We unfortunately didn't get the conference title last year. But I think this year, we're in a much better spot," Delman said. "We're a lot more confident this year and just really hungry to get that first-ever conference title."

While players are certainly eager to claim a championship title, Delman also credited the team's drive to the supportive environment and united front among all members.

COURTESY PHOTO

The women's tennis team is 4-0 in the NESCAC this season.

"We're friends before teammates," Delman said. "We all just love spending time with each other on and off the court, and I think that really translates well onto the courts."

Whether stepping onto the courts in Middlebury or Pasadena, Calif., the women's tennis team has made their presence known this season. Their drive, well-earned confidence and supportive team environment make their high ranking no surprise. This group of Panthers is one to look out for as they close out their regular season and fight for a NESCAC championship title later this month.

SPRING SPORTS UPDATE

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Senior Sports Editor

April has arrived, which means the semester is running toward the finish line, and with it, Middlebury's spring sports teams are arriving at a critical point as they approach the postseason. Since our season preview edition of The Campus on March 7, nearly every spring team has been in action.

Here's how each of them has fared so far:

Baseball

The baseball team is currently 14–7, though after a slow start to the season they've put together an impressive 8–2 record over the last ten games. The team played a decent chunk of their season so far in Florida for their annual spring break trip, where they displayed impressive resolve against some high-caliber opposition. The team defeated #13 ranked Johns Hopkins University in a 7–5 victory, and although they eventually fell to #2 ranked Endicott College, they can draw plenty of positives from the close 8–6 scoreline. The Panthers are riding high after sweeping Bowdoin College in a three game series this past weekend. Mitchell Schroeder MIIS '24 hit two grand slams and had 12 RBIs in the series, earning him NESCAC Player of the Week honors. Chris Borter '24, Beau Root '24 and Schroeder are pacing the team with 30, 28 and 29 hits respectively.

Softball

The softball team is 11–5 and in good form, stringing together five consecutive wins including a double header sweep against conference rival Bowdoin College. They have an important slate of NESCAC games coming up, but their confidence will be high as they've come out of their spring break trip looking strong and have only lost once on home soil so far. Kristyn Carroll '26, Megan Fox '24 and McKenna Lont '26 lead the team's batters with 27, 17 and 17 hits apiece, while Lont leads the pitching contingent with a 6–1 record from the mound.

Men's Lacrosse

Currently sitting at 7–5, the men's lacrosse team got off to a slow start after losing three of their opening four matches. Since then, however, the team has been looking progressively stronger, winning five from their last six, a run which has included decisive wins over NESCAC opponents like Colby College, Bates College, Connecticut College and Wesleyan University. The team has three games remaining in the regular season, all of which are against divisional opponents. At a pivotal point in the season, the team is hitting their stride at just the right time, although a recent 4–10 defeat to Hamilton College showed the team cannot afford to get complacent. Russell Thorndike '25 and William Ryan '24 have both been key players for the team thus far, scoring 27 and 22 goals, respectively.

Women's Lacrosse

The women's lacrosse team is undefeated with a 11–0 record, and its sights are now squarely set on defending both its NESCAC and national titles. The team is certainly on track to do so, brushing aside high caliber opponents like #5 Franklin & Marshall College and #10 College of New Jersey, both of whom they beat by at least eight points. Middlebury has been making winning look easy this season, with Wesleyan University the only one able to come within two points of toppling the Panthers. Hope Shue '25, Susan Rowley '24 and Caroline Adams '26 are the team's top scorers with 39, 35 and 25 hits respectively.

Men's Track and Field

The men's track and field team has recorded four meets so far, all but one of which came on the team's spring training trip to San Diego. They'll be returning to action Friday, April 12 at the Carla Coffey Invitational in Northampton, Mass., where they'll take on a number of regional competitors. The team's distance squad has looked strong to open the season, with Benjamin Hughes '27 taking a win in the 1,500m at the Ross and Sharon Irwin Invitational and Raymond Pavlik '27 taking fourth in the same event a week later. Owen Johnson '26 recorded a win in the 800m for the first time in his career, while Alec Gironda '24 won the 10,000m. In the field events, Dave Filias '25 has picked up where he left off in the indoor season, taking wins in the hammer throw and shot put in the second weekend, while Caleb Smith '27 picked up wins in the javelin and long jump.

Women's Track and Field

The women's track and field team has competed in the same four meets as the men, and now turns their attention to regional competition ahead of the NESCAC Championship in late April. In the opening weekend of competition, Macy Daggitt '25 scored an impressive win in the long jump to start the season off strong. She would repeat the feat a week later to continue her strong form. In the second weekend of competition, Audrey MacLean '27 continued her breakout year with a win in the 3,000m steeplechase, which makes her the fastest runner in DIII in the event. Reilly Isler '25 also notched a win in the javelin throw, while Ciara Dale '24 recorded an impressive win in the 400m hurdles.

Men's Tennis

The men's tennis team is off to a strong start to the season, sitting at a 10–3 record. The team sprinted out of the blocks to open the spring, winning their first eight games. Since then, the team has stumbled slightly, losing three of their last five matches, most recently at home to Williams College. With that being said, there is plenty of reason for optimism in the Panthers' camp. The team has recorded multiple wins against nationally ranked opponents, opening the season with a win against #20 ranked Brandeis University and following it up by defeating #5 ranked Tufts University. Noah Laber '24 is back in action following an injury, which has bolstered the team this spring. Hugh Hentschel '26 and Neel Epstein '25 are also in good form to open the season and are both unbeaten in league play.

Women's Tennis

The women's tennis team is 6–3 on the season and is 4–0 in NESCAC play, placing them atop the league standings. Notably, the team claimed a closely contested 5–4 win over #6 ranked Williams College, dealing a major blow to one of their main conference rivals. The team went 2–3 on their spring break trip to California, although all three of their losses came at the hands of teams ranked in the top 10 best in the nation. The team has seven big NESCAC matchups coming up, so they'll have to be at their best to maintain their perfect divisional record. Gena Huang '24 and Anna Lardner '26 are both unbeaten in league play, as is the doubles team of Amy Delman '24 and Sahana Raman '24.

Men's Golf

Middlebury men's golf debuted at the Bill Detrick Invitation this past weekend, where they placed seventh out of 15 teams competing. Henry Harrison '25 led the way for the Panthers, notching a score of two over par en route to a 17th placed finish at the two day event. Harrison's teammate Colin McCaigue '24 was not far behind, finishing the tournament in 21st place. The tournament offered a first glimpse into the team's current level, but they have two more tournaments to fine tune their form before they seek to defend their NESCAC title over the weekend of April 27–28.

Women's Golf

The women's golf team is yet to start their season. They will open their spring campaign at the Cortland Martin/Wallace Invitational on Saturday, April 13.

COURTESY PHOTO

Middlebury men's lacrosse is currently fourth in the NESCAC.

CEGLARSKI NAMED HEAD COACH OF MEN'S HOCKEY, STRIVING TO RETURN PROGRAM TO PROMINENCE

By ETHAN VASHEL
Staff Writer

COURTESY PHOTO / WILL COSTELLO

Jack Ceglarski guided the men's hockey to one of their strongest seasons in recent years.

The Middlebury men's hockey team has a rich tradition of success, with eight national titles, eight NESCAC championships and 47 All-American selections on its resumé. Despite these accolades, the Panthers have struggled in recent history. The team has not had a winning record since the 2012-13 season, and has not won the NESCAC championship since the 2009-10 season.

But the team's new head coach, Jack Ceglarski, is on track to change that. Under the guidance of Ceglarski as interim head coach this past season, the team won eight games, earned success against high-caliber teams and captured an upset victory against second-seeded Bowdoin College in the NESCAC quarterfinals. Most importantly though, Ceglarski ignited a change in the team's mindset.

Captain and leading scorer Jin Lee '25 was impressed by the new coach's approach this past season.

"The change in attitude that he instilled in us is very evident," Lee said. "He makes it fun to be there, and that is important because we spend so much time together throughout the year."

Lee said he and his teammates were not surprised when Ceglarski was officially named the head coach of the program on March 28.

Ceglarski is unquestionably well-versed in the hockey world. His playing career consisted of four years in college at SUNY Geneseo, a prominent DIII hockey school, and then a short stint professionally in the East Coast Hockey League. He then began his coaching career as an assistant at the University of New England before moving on to the University of Notre Dame.

Ceglarski finally found his way to Middlebury as an assistant before the 2021-22 season with a plethora of knowledge after working with high level coaches and winning a number of trophies as both a player and coach. His attachment to Middlebury extends much further back, however, as his father attended the school and played for the hockey team. Because of his father, Ceglarski has long known of and respected Middlebury for its academic and athletic excellence.

"I want to create an environment of trust, honesty, and respect," he said. "We as a program need to respect where our feet are and appreciate every second we have together. We are at a special place."

In spite of his strong list of credentials and his impressive start to his tenure, Ceglarski emphasized that as a relative novice to the business of head coaching, he still has much to learn.

"I'm adjusting on the fly and learning as I go," he said. "I'm lucky to be surrounded by a group of guys who are hungry to turn this program around, as well as the tremendous support system of Middlebury athletics."

Lee affirmed Ceglarski's ability to communicate with and learn from his players, emphasizing his appreciation for a coach who listens to his players.

When it comes to play style, Ceglarski placed emphasis on defensive discipline and frustrating opponents. This defensive efficiency was evident in a number of the Panthers' victories, particularly their impressive 5–1 playoff win against Bowdoin.

"We want to play responsible and structured. If you're structured without the puck, you'll get it back and have opportunities the other way," Ceglarski said.

Lee echoed the importance of structure in the Panther's game, but also acknowledged the freedom which Ceglarski allows his players to have in the offensive part of the game. The team scored 59 goals across the season, marking a major improvement from the 43 they tallied the year before.

"We have a free flowing offense and have the green light to try riskier plays that most coaches would frown upon," Lee said. "Just don't get your shot blocked is what [Ceglarski] tells us."

While they may have come away with a losing record, the Panthers certainly had their moments throughout last season. After a tough start to the year, Middlebury recorded an impressive victory over #11 Norwich University 3–0, which sparked a 4–1–1 record over their next six games. This stretch aided in Middlebury's playoff push, where they were able to beat Bowdoin 5–1, marking the first career playoff victory under Ceglarski's guidance. The Panthers went on to fall 5–2 to Trinity College, the eventual NESCAC champion and NCAA DIII finalist.

The Bantams were one of the many strong teams Middlebury played closely to throughout the season, and both Ceglarski and Lee recognized the team's need to focus on perfecting the details this offseason leading into next year.

"We need to learn how to win as a program," he said. "You have to play a full 60 minutes in this league because it is so low scoring. You cannot fall asleep for a second."

Middlebury tasted success this past season, and although the ice is gone from Kenyon until next season, the team is already back to work in the weight room, determined to improve on this season's results next winter.

THE CRÊPERIE

PROVIDING YOU A WEDNESDAY NIGHT TREAT

By MAYA ALEXANDER
Contributing Writer

If you're near Gifford Hall on a Wednesday night, you are likely to stop and wonder what that delectable brown sugar, buttery scent is — the irresistible smell of crêpes. The Creperie at Wednesday Night Open Mic Party (WOMP) has been providing dessert to fulfill students' cravings when the dining halls are closed for the night for over a year.

Coming through the Gamut Room door at 8 p.m., I was greeted by two of the four Creperie employees prepping in the kitchen, listening to their own tunes before WOMP started just 30 minutes later. They had taken down orders from the week prior and hung up a freshly printed menu, which included the crêpe flavor of the week.

Launched in January 2023, I wondered what inspired such a unique business and how it came to be. It turns out that Creperie founder Lily Buren '26 often cooked crêpes for her friends at home as her go-to party trick.

"In high school I used to make crepes a lot for my friends, and last January I was like, 'I want to bring this to Middlebury,'" Buren told me over lunch last Friday.

Few students have access to the Gamut Room kitchen in Gifford, but Buren set her mind to forming a crêpe business there. After getting in contact with the staff in charge of the Gamut Room, completing a food manager training in the Proctor Dining Hall basement and coordinating with members in the Student Activities Office, Buren gained access to the kitchen and started the Creperie.

Listening to Buren, I could feel her passion for this one-of-a-kind skill and how it has brought both her friends from home and from college together, including Zachary Taylor '26, Aksil Boughida '26 and Ellie Trinkle '26.

Over dinner, I asked Trinkle to reflect on her journey as a member of the Creperie, and how the business has evolved since last year. Initially, Trinkle said that she would assist in promotional work for the business, creating eye-catching menus and Instagram stories.

After the first night running the Creperie, however, the team realized they needed another person in the kitchen to keep the system organized.

"I helped to develop our ordering system. We accept phone numbers, so we're not noisy and disturbing the performances going on at WOMP," Trinkle explained. "And then I also make the menus digitally. Every week I do the prep, I make the batter, social media, all that good stuff."

The first few weeks the Creperie ran, tickets would be sent to the back of the kitchen and the members would call out order numbers, which was logistically challenging with the live music simultaneously playing at WOMP. To resolve this problem, the Creperie developed a system of collecting phone numbers, which alerts customers when their order is ready without disrupting the performance.

This system would not be possible without Taylor working the front of the house.

"I just greet people. I say 'hey, how are you? How's your night going?' I take their orders. I write them down. I get their phone numbers. I do all that," Taylor said.

While Buren's mastery cooking skills are essential to the success of the Creperie, the three other members have an equally crucial role.

"I have never made a crêpe before. I'm not gonna lie," Taylor told me proudly. But that doesn't mean Taylor cannot share the joy of eating a crêpe with his customers.

"I do love indulging in the crepes," he added. "My favorite is the Nutella and banana crepe... if I'm working a shift, I need at least one or two crepes to just keep me going. And it's a great, great little snack at the end of the day."

Having arrived at Middlebury right after the Creperie's debut, Sailor Kabeary '26.5 is a frequent visitor of its late-night kitchen. Right after she arrived on campus, Kabeary started performing at WOMP and inevitably developed a routine of indulging in a post-performance snack at the Creperie.

"It was like my little reward," Kabeary said, reflecting on her first few times buying a crêpe. "Now, this year I live in Gifford, and so it's literally a 30-second walk to the Creperie. And so I frequent it. It's a good study break."

Now, Kabeary is good friends with the owners of the Creperie and is even happier to know she is supporting the people she loves.

"I am very in awe of all of the Creperie employees. I mean, the flavors that they've come up with recently have been incredible. They've really stepped up their game. And also, just bottom line: they make a really good crepe," Kabeary said.

It's true: the Creperie makes a really impressive crêpe and I would argue that it tastes significantly better than ones I've had from other establishments in the past.

I am also impressed with how the business strives to continuously improve its craft and organization. I frequent the Creperie about once a month, and I'm always amazed by the complexity of and the thought put into the flavors. Creativity has a home at the Creperie.

Every week, there's a special flavor of the week, some of which have been permanently added to the menu, such as raspberry white chocolate and maple butter. The team recently developed an online ordering system through Jotform. Trinkle mentioned that the business even started doing delivery to select locations on campus, which has been a fun experiment and new way to connect with more students on campus.

What's perhaps more striking than the food itself is the connection between the four co-workers. As Trinkle expressed, when working in such a tight space, you're forced to figure out a rhythm with the other people.

The team knows how to collaborate with each other and how to commit effectively to their work, but it also makes my day when I see them laughing and lovingly bantering with one another together as they prepare behind the counter.

"The creperie means, honestly, a family at Middlebury. Something to look forward to every week," Taylor said.

Editor's note: Ellie Trinkle '26 is a News Editor for The Campus.

Trinkle and Buren prepping before the creperie opens.

PHOTOS BY MAYA ALEXANDER

The Creperie Team: Ellie Trinkle '26, Zachary Taylor '26, Lily Buren '26 and Aksil Boughida '26.

Boughida pouring crepe batter.

Taylor indulges in his evening dessert.

Buren prepping before the Creperie opens on a Wednesday night.